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U.S. Postal Service, MBDC Announce “Cradle to Cradle”SM Certification

Half a Billion Packages and Envelopes Meet Higher Environmental Standards

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Consumers now can send a very “green” message across town or around the world when sending Priority Mail and Express Mail packages and envelopes.

The U.S. Postal Service is the only mailing or shipping company in the nation to achieve “Cradle to Cradle” Certification at the Silver level from MBDC (McDonough Braungart Design Chemistry) for human and environmental health. Postal Service mailing and shipping supplies already had exceeded government requirements, including recycled content standards from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Going beyond existing federal and state agency requirements was a goal in seeking certification.

Cradle to Cradle Certification is a scientifically based process that reviews specific criteria to assess the environmental attributes of materials used in products. MBDC examined 60 packaging items, breaking those items down to 250 component materials and then further analyzing 1,400 individual ingredients in those component materials before awarding the certification.

Based on the recycled content of the more than 500 million Express Mail and Priority Mail packages and envelopes the Postal Service provides its customers each year, more than 15,000 metric tons of carbon equivalent emissions (climate change gases) now will be prevented annually. Express Mail and Priority Mail boxes and envelopes also are 100 percent recyclable.

To achieve certification, all 200 suppliers contributing to the manufacture of Postal Service envelopes and packages completed a demanding series of measurements and assessments of materials for human and environmental health. Maintaining these new, higher standards is now an integral part of doing business with the Postal Service.

“We are proud that the collaborative efforts of so many businesses, suppliers and production companies will result in improved human and environmental health,” said Postmaster General John E. Potter. “At the Postal Service, we continue to find innovative ways to help the environment without passing added costs onto our customers. Consumers will not see any change in price, service or convenience.”

All materials were examined using 39 criteria for human and environmental health, including toxicity, renewable energy, water stewardship, recyclability and other manufacturing attributes.

The Postal Service also worked with MBDC to gain certification for an additional 200 million pieces of mailing supplies used each year (decals, labels, packing tape), examining inks, tapes and adhesives.



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"We are very excited by the launch of Cradle to Cradle certified Express Mail and Priority Mail packaging. I would like to recognize the Postal Service's leadership in gaining Cradle to Cradle Certification, being on a positive trajectory to becoming more sustainable, and helping their customers make smarter choices. This is the first major national and international product to gain MBDC's certification that is used by consumers every day," said William McDonough, MBDC co-founder.

The Postal Service also has redesigned all Priority Mail and Express Mail packages and envelopes, including the popular Flat-Rate boxes and envelopes. Customers now can use the same Priority Mail or Express Mail packaging whether shipping within the United States or to another country. Eliminating the need for separate materials for international mail further reduces source material for recycling.

All Priority Mail and Express Mail packages and envelopes, and the popular Flat-Rate boxes and envelopes, are available to customers free of charge.

"Free and even more environmentally friendly. That's a message everyone can send," said Anita Bizzotto, Postal Service chief marketing officer.

Cradle to Cradle-certified envelopes, packages and mailing supplies are available in post offices across the country and online at www.USPS.com/business.

Please note: An electronic press kit featuring broadcast quality b-roll and sound is available. Log on to www.usps.com and click on "newsroom." Media also may contact Joanne Veto at 202-268-3118 or joanne.m.veto@usps.gov.

¹Carbon equivalent calculations are based on recycled content data provided by USPS packaging suppliers and using EPA's Recycled Content (ReCon) Tool (http://epa.gov/climatechange/wywd/waste/calculators/ReCon_Online.html).

²Packaging is recyclable following use, where facilities exist for corrugated boxes and paperboard envelopes and via DuPont for Tyvek envelopes (http://envelopes.tyvek.com/en/science/versatile/vers_recycle.shtml). Component materials for labels and label tape are recyclable within their manufacturing facilities and represent opportunities for extension to the consumer level.

About the U.S. Postal Service

An independent federal agency, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that visits 146 million homes and businesses, six days a week. It has 37,000 retail locations and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to pay for operating expenses, not tax dollars. The Postal Service has annual revenues of \$73 billion and delivers almost half of the world's mail volume.

About MBDC

MBDC (McDonough Braungart Design Chemistry) is a consultancy founded in 1995 by the world-renowned architect William McDonough and innovative chemist Dr. Michael Braungart to reorient the design of products, processes and systems to provide environmental, societal and financial benefits. MBDC and its co-founders developed and are implementing the innovative Cradle to Cradle paradigm, a unique vision and leadership strategy for industry to realize practical, profitable ecologically-intelligent product design and expand the definition of quality. For more information on MBDC and Cradle to Cradle Certification, please visit www.mbdc.com and www.c2ccertified.com.